



The Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth

Commission Directory

2016



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Michel Anteby, Vice Chair

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Officers



Julian Dormitzer
Commission Chair

Julian joined the Fenway Institute at Fenway Health and now works there as a clinical research nurse on the Adolescent Trials Network Team. She serves as a member of the Young Leadership Council of Fenway Health and tutors youth at the Hyde Square Task Force. Julian graduated from Grand Valley State University in May of 2011 with a Bachelor's degree in nursing, where she wrote a senior thesis on HIV incidence among young men who have sex with men (MSM). Originally from Traverse City, Michigan, Julian resides in Jamaica Plain.



Vilma Uribe
Commission Vice Chair

Vilma Uribe received her Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies from Oberlin College in 2011. Since moving to Boston, she has worked with Renewal House and Fenway Health to support survivors of partner abuse, sexual violence, hate crimes, and police misconduct. She has also volunteered with the Hispanic Black Gay Coalition as a HUES board member. Currently, Vilma serves as the Community Organizer for The Network/La Red. She has served on the MA LGBTQ Youth Commission since 2012, working with state agencies to improve the quality of services and support for LGBT youth in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her cat Dinosaur.



Michel Anteby

Commission Vice Chair

Michel is an Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior and of Sociology (by courtesy) at Boston University. His research looks at how individuals relate to their work, their occupations, and the organizations they belong to. He examines more specifically the practices people engage in at work that help them sustain their chosen cultures or identities. He holds a joint Ph.D. in sociology from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris and in management from New York University. Michel grew up in France and previously volunteered as a mediator at the LGBT Community Center in New York.

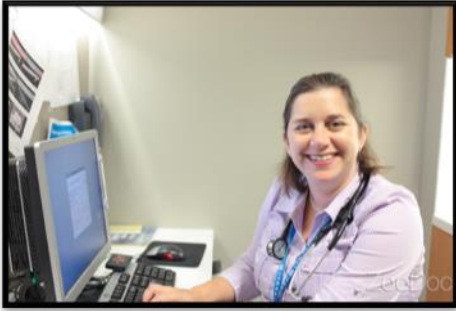
Commission Members



Coco Alinsug

Community Relations Committee

Coco devotes himself to social justice, HIV/AIDS prevention, and LGBT youth issues and receives recognition both nationally and internationally for his relentless work. He has served as Executive Director of the North Shore Alliance of GLBT Youth (NAGLY) for nine years and the Outreach and Insurance Manager of Fenway Health. He consults various HIV and STD Outreach Programs located in the North Shore and Boston. Coco and his team travel around New England, educating people about HIV and STD transmission. He also attends international conferences around the world as a polyglot fluent in nine languages. Originally from the Philippines, Coco resides in Lynn with his husband Peter.



Miranda Balkin

Government Relations Committee

Miranda Balkin is a family physician in practice at Fenway Community Health Center. She is a graduate of Oberlin College, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and the Tufts University Family Medicine Residency. She is a former board chair of Medical Students for Choice and has extensive volunteer experience in the LGBTQ community. She hails from New York City and western Massachusetts and currently lives in Cambridge with her wife and two children. She is an avid knitter, and erstwhile political activist.



Aliya Bean

Government Relations Committee

Aliya Bean is finishing up her undergraduate degree at Brandeis University studying History and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She volunteers for Greater Boston PFLAG where she works as both a facilitator and speaker as part of their Safe Schools and Workplace initiative. She also works as a Research Assistant at the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism, researching wrongful convictions for their innocence project as well as human trafficking for their gender justice project. Aliya is currently writing a senior honors thesis entitled “These Girlish Devotions: Women’s Colleges, the Evolution of Female Friendship, and the Development of a Lesbian Identity from 1890s-1930s.” Originally from the suburbs of Needham, MA she is presently living in Waltham, MA. After graduation Aliya will be moving to Washington D.C. to pursue a career in LGBTQ policy and advocacy work.



Jesse Blue Glass Begenyi

Government Relations Committee

Jesse Begenyi works as the Director of Community Advocacy at the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC) where they coordinate the Trans Suicide Prevention Working Group, collaborate on the Trans Youth and Parent Summit with the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Youth (BAGLY), and provide resources and support to community members. Jesse is also an experienced trainer, and facilitates workshops on topics related to trans identities. Jesse is also a Master of Social Work Candidate at Simmons College and is a clinical intern at the Waltham House, a group home for LGBTQ identified youth. Jesse provides a supportive space for young people to explore gender identity and sexual orientation, identify and work towards future goals, and move towards living in the world in healthier and more authentic ways. Jesse also holds a BA in Visual & Media Arts with a specialization in Documentary Video Production from Emerson College and is producing a feature length documentary about partner abuse in trans and LGBTQ communities. Last and certainly not least, Jesse enjoys long walks, knitting cozy things, petting cats, and watching the Lifetime network.



Roger Bourgeois

Safe Schools Committee Co-Chair

Roger Bourgeois has been a school superintendent for the last 8 years and has over 34 years of experience in vocational, technical, and agricultural education as a teacher and administrator. He has worked throughout his career to foster positive school cultures that are welcoming, accepting, and supportive of all students, and has spearheaded efforts in schools to create a supportive environment for LGBT students. He believes that a safe and nurturing school climate is a foundational prerequisite for students to achieve and succeed at high levels. Mr. Bourgeois has spoken widely to school communities as a parent of a gay son. His family's story was featured on WCVB TV's Chronicle: Growing Up Gay

in February, 2011. He and his wife, Robin, live in Middleton, MA. They are the proud parents of three children and four grandchildren.



Zac Brokenrope
Safe Schools Committee

Zac Broken Rope is employed as an English teacher in suburban Boston. He has worked extensively with Greater Boston PFLAG through their safe schools programs and was actively involved with LGBTQ causes while a student at Boston University, where he graduated from in 2012 with a degree in Education. He cares passionately about creating safe schools for students and working to create LGBTQ inclusive curriculum. He currently resides in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood of Boston and is originally from Nebraska.

Nai Collymore-Henry
Community Relations Committee

Nai Collymore-Henry graduated from Boston University with a Bachelor's Degree in Public Relations. Prior to joining Mass NOW, Nai served as an intern with Boston City Councilor At-Large Ayanna Pressley where she interacted with Boston residents and constituents and assisted office staff. She later went on to serve as a fellow on Ayanna Pressley's re-election campaign in 2015 where she helped to plan field activities and events. Nai serves on the board of the Boston Cyclists Union where she advocates for safer streets and roadways in the Greater Boston area. She also sits on the Boston Dyke March Planning Committee where she helps to fundraise, plan, and execute the 1,500 person march, a celebration of queer identity during Pride Weekend. While attending Boston University, she served as one of the co-directors of the Center for Gender, Sexuality, and Activism where she managed a board of 14 coordinators and over 40 volunteers.

She is especially passionate about ensuring that the voices of marginalized groups are amplified in policy and community building initiatives pertaining to women and girls. In September 2015, Nai was hired as the Policy & Operations Manager where she will continue to be an advocate for women and girls across the state of Massachusetts.

Kristin Comment

Safe Schools Committee

Kris teaches English and co-advises the GSA at Belmont High School; she is also a part-time Visiting Associate Professor at Framingham State University. She holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of Maryland, College Park, where she piloted one of the first undergraduate classes in LGBT literature. Her research has explored representations of female homoeroticism in nineteenth-century literature, and she has published on lesbian themes in works by several 19th-century American writers, among them Emily Dickinson. Her article, “Wasn’t she a lesbian?: Teaching Homoerotic Themes in Whitman and Dickinson” appeared in English Journal’s 2009 special LGBT issue. She is currently working with a team of educators from across the state to produce ELA model curriculum units for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.



Julian Cyr

Government Relations Committee, Co-Chair

Julian Cyr has broad experience in public policy, health advocacy, and politics. He has served on the Commission since January 2011, including a highly successful tenure as Chair (2013-2014). Julian is currently Director of Policy and Regulatory Affairs for Environmental Health at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Prior to this post, he was Deputy Director for Government Affairs at the Department. He organized on Governor Patrick and President Obama’s successful re-election campaigns, and worked as a Harm-Reduction Counselor at the AIDS Support Group of Cape Cod. Previously, Julian interned at the White House, contributing to green jobs policy and

energy efficiency at the Council on Environmental Quality in the Executive Office of the President. He has also worked for the William J. Clinton Foundation's Clinton Global Initiative. Julian studied public policy and community health at New York University, where he also led undergraduate student government. He is a Cape Cod native and resident of Truro, Massachusetts.



Lee Doyle
Community Relations Committee

Lee works with survivors of partner abuse and sexual violence, facilitates trainings, educates on violence prevention and LGBTQ/T competency, and organizes communities around violence prevention as a public health issue. They have been working in sexual violence and partner abuse prevention for the past five years and have been doing youth work for over ten years. Lee is passionate about youth empowerment, violence prevention, trans* health, and glitter. Lee graduated from UNC Asheville in 2011 where they graduated with degrees in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Africana Studies. Originally from Mississippi, Lee now resides in Jamaica Plain.



Athena Edmonds
Government Relations Committee

Advocate for LGBTQ Youth, currently serving on the Board of Greater Boston PFLAG, on the Steering Committee for Freedom MA, and on the MA Commission on LGBTQ Youth. Athena has advocated with the legislature, the insurance industry, and the medical establishment to address LGBTQ healthcare disparities. Athena is also a poet. Since completing her MFA in Creative Writing at Lesley University, her poetry has appeared in literary journals such as The Massachusetts Review, Connotation Press and Feminist Studies. She has completed residencies at Ragdale, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, and Hedgebrook. Between 2000 and 2006

Athena Edmonds founded and managed Zoe Capital, a fund whose principal investment focus was seed stage software start-ups. Before that, she founded and served as Managing and General Partner of Fayerweather, LP. For more than ten years, she advised and mentored companies in how to proceed with early stage venture financing. She is also a venture partner at First Light Capital and Walnut Venture Associates, a member of Common Angels, and a member of the Venture Capital Advisory Board for the Center of Women and Enterprise in Boston. Apart from her MFA, Athena Edmonds holds a BS degree from MIT in Materials Science and Engineering, a BS from the Sloan School of Management, and a Certificate of Post-Graduate studies in Materials Science from the University of Cambridge in England. Born and raised in Thessaloniki, Greece, she lives with her husband and four children in the greater Boston area.

Dan English

Safe Schools Committee

Dan is a high school senior (class of 2016) at Holbrook Jr/Sr High School who was been involved with LGBTQ work both in their high school and across the state. They restarted the GSA at their school at the beginning of their senior year. Dan has been doing trainings to educate teachers, students, therapists, and others on LGBTQ (particularly transgender/non-binary) issues and participating in the GSA Leadership Council for three years. They plan to attend college in fall of 2016.



Paul Gels

Government Relations Committee

Paul is the Communications Manager for Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts and the Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund of Massachusetts. He completed his undergrad at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst studying Marketing and English with a minor in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Paul's passions include legislative advocacy, youth organizing, digital organizing, LGBTQ-inclusive sexuality education, and queer media. Born and raised in Boston, Paul currently resides in Fenway.



Frank Giuliano
Safe Schools Committee

Frank has been a professor at Westfield State University for 19 years. His courses, field experiences, and research interests all focus on pre-service teachers and students at the K-12 level. He is currently working with a colleague on a research project that examines the efficacy of teacher preparation programs with regard to fostering the knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to bullying prevention. He co-presented the results of this work at the Auburn University Anti-Bullying Summit and the American Association for Teaching and Curriculum. He has provided many workshops, panel presentations, and guest lectures with regard to LGBTQ issues on campus, and he has served as a faculty advisor to the QSA. Frank also has experience as a K-12 public school teacher.

Zuleny Gonzalez
Safe Schools Committee

Bio coming soon!



Sasha Goodfriend
Government Relations Committee Co-Chair

Sasha joined the Commission in 2015 and quickly became engrossed in the work of the Government Relations (talking to legislators at the State House, meeting with various government agencies) thanks to fabulous commission mentors. Currently, she co-chairs the Government Relations Committee with Alex Nally.

When she's not working with the Commission, she serves as Co-President of Mass NOW, working to advance intersectional justice for people who identify as women or girls in the Commonwealth. By day, Sasha is the Project Coordinator for the President's Office at Simmons College.



Scott Hadland
Government Relations Committee

Scott Hadland is an adolescent medicine physician at Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. He is a faculty member of the National LGBT Health Education Center, as well as member of the Institutional Review Board at the Fenway Institute. Dr. Hadland's clinical and research interests focus on substance use and other risk behaviors among youth. He received his MD degree from Washington University in St. Louis and his MPH from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health before completing his pediatrics residency and chief residency for the Boston Combined Residency Program. He is subspecialty trained in Adolescent Medicine and in Addiction Medicine.



Susan Hollins
Safe Schools Committee

Susan grew up in an extremely rural place, followed by living 10 years in Boston. She went from a limited, rural high school education to somehow earning a Ph.D. with distinction from a top US college. She transitioned from a serious, classical musician (piano) to a school superintendent, spending 40 years as a central office school administrator in three states. Susan has strong core beliefs and has challenged the system at times, which takes courage and stamina. She's been recognized as a leader in school reform, had her own consulting firm, and has been

active in addressing and changing legislation in three states. Her only child's life has taught her tons about the LGBTQ experience, although she is still learning. She's taught at four graduate schools and has skills in policy, budget, legislation, disability, change. She cares about people, communities, inclusion, nondiscrimination, and every variety of youth. Retired from full-time school superintendent work in 2014, she consults in issues that span fields of education, the arts, and economic development and is starting to practice piano again after 40 years. She was recently elected to her local school committee and is now, a member of both MASC and MASS. This is her third year with the commission.



Nicolas John
Operations Committee

Nicolas worked in Massachusetts State Government in various capacities over the last five years. At present, he is the Chief of Staff to the Vice Chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means. He has been proud to serve as a member of the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth since 2012. He uses his government background and knowledge of the state budget process to help advise and advance the Commission's legislative and budget priorities.

He sought membership on this Commission as a way to put his knowledge and expertise to good use to advance the broad and diverse community to which he belongs. It has been an honor and a privilege for him to be part of such a passionate and dedicated group over the years.

Harold Jones
Government Relations Committee

Harold is an attorney at the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh and Northeastern University School of Law. Harold resides in Cambridge.



Rachel Kahn

Community Relations & Government Relations Committee

Rachel is a mental health clinician, and expressive therapist, who works as 1/3 of the behavioral health staff at the Sidney Borum Jr. Health Center (the youth branch of Fenway Health, serving clients 12-29 years old). At the Borum, Rachel provides clinical care to LGBTQ youth/young adults-- as well as youth/young adults who are experiencing homelessness, sex work, substance abuse, recent HIV/STI diagnoses, and street involvement-- and developed/facilitates a monthly drop-in night for parents/guardians of transgender and gender nonconforming youth. Prior to joining the Borum staff, Rachel spent many years working with adolescents in out of home therapeutic placements, and intensive day stabilization services. In that capacity, she piloted innovative therapeutic programming integrating social justice, diversity issues, and expressive arts into the treatment milieu, and created/facilitated a GSA for youth in acute levels of care.

Rachel is also a freelance writer and performer, and performs regularly as part of The Femme Show-- a Boston-based performance collective creating work about queer femininity and femme identity. Rachel has performed, provided trainings, and facilitated workshops all over the east coast. She has also served as the volunteer coordinator for the 2009 International Expressive Arts Therapies Association (IEATA) conference and as a steering committee member/the volunteer chair for the 2012 Femme Conference. Rachel holds a Master's degree in expressive therapies and mental health counseling from Lesley University, and a Bachelor's degree in English from Mount Holyoke College. She lives in Jamaica Plain.



Stewart Landers

Community Relations & Operations Committee

Stewart was born and raised in New York City and moved to Boston in 1973 when he was 17 and came out as a gay man. Since then, he was part of numerous gay organization including serving as chair of

Fenway Community Health in the 1980s and the Massachusetts Lesbian and Gay Bar Association in the 1990s. He became involved with the Commission at the invitation of Arthur Lipkin, former Chair. His commitment to the Commission is to support the development of policies in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that lead to safe spaces for LGBTQQ youth of color and abilities.



Allen Lin

Government Relations Committee

Allen is a Ph.D. student in Systems Biology at Harvard University. His research focuses on developing new therapies against HIV at the Ragon Institute of Massachusetts General Hospital, MIT and Harvard. He graduated with an M.Sc. in Public Health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 2014, where he wrote a thesis modeling the health benefits and cost-effectiveness of vaccinating gay and bisexual men against the human papillomavirus (HPV) in the United Kingdom, to protect against cancers disproportionately faced by such men. This research subsequently led the UK government to extend HPV vaccination beyond girls to include gay and bisexual men and transgender women. He also holds an M.Phil. in Technology Policy from the University of Cambridge, and engineering degrees from MIT. Originally from New Jersey, Allen resides in Brookline.

Mark Mettler

Safe Schools Committee

Mark is the married father of two adult children, the younger of whom is a 22 year old transgender female. He's been a volunteer speaker for Greater Boston PFLAG for the last several years, and last July was elected Board Chair of the organization. He is taking advantage of this opportunity to join the Commission because he's interested in learning more about the way public entities, non-profit organizations, and private businesses work together to address challenges in our society. After a 32 year career in corporate America, he recently began a

sabbatical to figure out how he wants to spend the rest of his life. Part of his motivation was to devote more time to his work with PFLAG, and more broadly to supporting LGBT rights and improving environments and outcomes for LGBT youth. His wife Laurie and him, also own a small business, a retail store in Wellesley, which will take some more of his time now. They currently live in Westborough, but with both kids out of the house are thinking about downsizing and moving closer to Wellesley. His personal passions are writing, cooking, and golf, all of which he hopes to do more of this year.

Alexander Armand Nally

Government Relations Committee

Alex is a genderqueer mixed race artist/activist from Springfield, MA with an interest in government systems. Currently they are the Co-Chair of the Government Relations Committee with Sasha Goodfriend. They spearhead the annual policy recommendations workgroup that meets with and issues recommendations to over twenty different state agencies annually. The policy work is a critical piece to the larger puzzle of ensuring safety and equitable services are provided to LGBTQ youth in Massachusetts and through these recommendations they ask agencies to provide culturally competent services, develop and disperse relevant resources, and collect LGBTQ youth data to aid in making the Commonwealth more accessible for LGBTQ youth.

Currently, they are a senior in the Studio for Interrelated Media BFA program at MassArt in Boston where they are also the President of the Student Government Association. In addition to the policy work on the Commission, they are a member of the Campus Safety and Violence Prevention Task Force with the Board of Higher Education. SGA was the first organization they got involved with in college and through their work there they passed a preferred name policy for students at MassArt whose preferred names differ from their legal ones.

Alex is called to this work on the Commission because they've experienced the statistic of being

homeless and couch surfing as a queer teenager, and wanted to be part of the movement and work that makes their communities safer and more inclusive.



Brett Nava-Coulter

Government Relations Committee

Brett studies as a Ph.D. student in sociology at Northeastern University. His schoolwork specializes in gender and sexuality, public health, and cultural competency for service providers. His experiences include a combination of research, policy, and political work. Brett received his Bachelor's degree from UC Berkeley and now works with undergraduates as an adjunct instructor at Tufts University and Northeastern University. Brett resides in Jamaica Plain.



Daniel J. O'Donoghue

Safe Schools Committee

Daniel is an educator and activist with a long history of working and volunteering within the Trans and LGB community across Massachusetts. He currently teaches Health, Family & Consumer Sciences to middle and high school students at Hopkins Academy in Hadley, MA. He strives to be a positive and visible role model to both students and staff in an effort to create a fully inclusive learning community. In addition to his role as a teacher Daniel advises the Training Active Bystanders and Embracing Diversity Club, and co-advises the GSA.

Daniel received a Master of Education in Social Justice Education from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and is passionate about creating spaces where people can explore their personal stories, discuss the complexity of their identities and build relationships across difference using a social justice framework. His experiences at UMass included co-teaching undergraduate courses in intergroup dialogue (IGD) and transgender oppression, as well as

being trained in Social Justice Mediation.

Prior to teaching, Daniel worked with multiple populations of folks who were impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault, substance abuse, mental health challenges and homelessness, including work at TransCEND, a program of AIDS Action Committee, GLSEN Massachusetts and the GLBTQ Domestic Violence Project. Daniel has been a Steering Committee member and co-Chair of the Community Organization committee at Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC), as well as volunteering as an Adult Advisor at BAGLY.

Daniel is one of the founding members of the TrailStormers, a trans/all gender inclusive softball team in Boston and enjoys spending as much time on the field as he does off, creating an inclusive place for folks to connect and have fun. Daniel resides in Easthampton, where he enjoys nature photography and can often be found walking in the woods, hiking and birding.

Susan S. Rees

Safe Schools Committee, Co-Chair; Operations Committee

Appointed to the Commission by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Susan co-chairs the Safe Schools Committee. She has over thirty years of professional experiences in public education dedicated to working in collaboration with teachers and administrators to advance the rights and lives of children. She has served as executive director of ACCEPT Education Collaborative, a nonprofit agency serving 15 school districts in Metrowest to promote excellence and innovation in educational practice. Her previous experience also includes classroom and university teaching and school administration. Currently, Susan is an educational consultant specializing in leadership and teacher development to build capacity in general education to serve students with diverse learning needs. She is a past member of the board of the Massachusetts Federation for the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), serving as their Child and Youth Advocacy Network representative in Washington, D.C., the Learning

Disabilities Network (LDN), and the Massachusetts Organization of Education Collaboratives (MOEC). She has six grown children and resides in Brookline, MA with her husband.



Jonathan Reveil

Community Relations Committee, Co-Chair

At Codman Square Health Center (CSHC), Jonathan works as the Prevention and Outreach Coordinator within the HIV Services Department. His cultural background and focus on community collaboration has led him to a number of volunteer opportunities and various community leadership roles. Currently, he serves as a member of the Ryan White Planning Council, an independent federally required planning body that works to organize, evaluate, prioritize, and allocate Ryan White Part A HIV funding in the Boston Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) for people living with HIV/AIDS. Moreover, he sits on the Board of Directors at the Hispanic Black Gay Coalition and serves on the Steering Committee of the Young Leaders Council at Fenway Health. Jonathan aspires to use his voice to foster constructive dialogues between LGBTQ people and faith institutions in order to educate and lessen the discrimination, and the religion-based prejudices that keep young LGBTQ people feeling safe and supported. He challenges others to do the same.



Calvin Ridley

Community Relations Committee

Calvin Ridley is currently an undergraduate student at Framingham State University, where they are pursuing a B.A in Painting and Diversity Studies. As the Chair for the Gender and Inclusion Ad-Hoc Committee in FSU's Student Government Association, Cal advocated for the creation of Gender Neutral restrooms, Gender Inclusive Housing and a Preferred Name Policy. They also facilitate LGBTQ Safe Space trainings and Transgender 101 trainings for students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, Cal serves as an Advisory Board Member for Campus Pride and as a Counselor at Camp Aranu'tiq of

Harbor Camps, a summer camp for transgender and gender non-conforming children and teens. As a queer, agender, and trans masculine identified artist, much of their multimedia work focuses on both LGBTQ identities and intimate relationships. Cal is passionate about combining art and activism and hopes that their work with the Commission will foster this as well as engage LGBTQ youth and community members in collaborative art about LGBTQ identities, realities, and struggles. Originally from New Hampshire, they currently reside in Framingham, MA.



Erika Rickard, J.D.

Government Relations Committee, Co-Chair

Erika is a lawyer, and the Access to Justice Coordinator for the MA Trial Court. She has expertise on juvenile justice, youth homelessness, and child welfare issues. When Erika was an AAG at the Attorney General's Office, she worked to implement the Massachusetts Bullying Prevention Law. A current member and former Vice Chair of the Commission, Erika previously co-chaired the Government Relations Committee, and spearheaded the Policy Recommendations for several years. She holds her J.D. from Harvard Law School and her Bachelor's degree from Mills College. Originally from Tucson, AZ, Erika lives in Jamaica Plain with her wife Sarah and baby Henry.

Deborah Shields

Bio Coming Soon!!!



Kelly Simon

Safe Schools Committee

Kelly currently teaches high school students in English Language Arts and co-advises the Gender & Sexuality Alliance (GSA; formerly Gay Straight Alliance) at Westfield High School in Westfield, MA. In 2003, she began teaching at Westfield Vocational Technical High School; when a student

approached her about starting a GSA, she had no idea how to go about doing that! During a brief leave to complete her M.Ed. in Social Justice Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, she studied GSAs in vocational technical schools, gender and sexuality, size oppression, multicultural organizational development (MCOD), and intergroup dialogue (IGD). She was fortunate to work as the graduate assistant and Speakers Bureau Coordinator for the Stonewall Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst; upon return to teaching in Westfield (this time at the high school), she was not only ready to take on the work of advising a GSA, but also more knowledgeable and prepared to facilitate an English Language Arts classroom from the lens of promoting social justice and diversity. Prior to teaching, Kelly was an AmeriCorps member working as the Legal Referral Program Coordinator and a Counselor/Advocate at Safe Passage, an agency serving survivors of domestic violence. When hired full-time at Safe Passage, she worked as a SAFEPLAN advocate in the Probate and Family Court. When not teaching, grading papers, or chaperoning GSA students at conferences and regional meetings, she enjoys writing, running, dancing, and playing softball. Originally from Colorado, Kelly now resides in Easthampton.



Grace Sterling Stowell

Community Relations & Operations Committee

Grace has been a pioneering activist and leader in the social justice and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) youth communities for over 35 years. She is the founding executive director of the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Youth (BAGLY), one of the oldest and largest LGBT youth organizations in the nation. She is a founding member of several local and national LGBT youth advocacy organizations, and she currently serves as an Executive Committee member of the Massachusetts Commission on LGBT Youth and Steering Committee member of the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC). Grace is also a nationally known advocate and leader on the issues facing transgender youth and young adults. Grace received a B.A. in English from Curry College in Milton, MA and a M.A. in Counseling Psychology from Lesley University in Cambridge, where

she resides. While Grace has served many roles in her community work over the past three decades, she is particularly honored to be known as “Mother” (and now “Grandmother!”) by three generations of greater Boston’s LGBT youth.



Colby Swettberg

Community Relations Committee

Colby is an educator and a social worker by profession and currently serve as CEO at Silver Lining Mentoring, a non-profit organization working with youth in foster care to provide long term mentoring and life skill development opportunities. They live in Somerville and enjoy spending time outside with their wife, toddler and their two dogs.

Phil Veysey

Safe Schools Committee

Phil is a white gay man married to his partner of 15 years. Now retired, he used to teach science in Boston Public Schools for 30 years mostly at the middle school level. He used to work as the Director of Educational Policy and Programs at AFT Massachusetts for 10 years. He is a member of the Safe Schools committee.



Lawrence Vinson

Community Relations Committee, Co-Chair

Lawrence originally hails from Georgia where he attended Morehouse College. Late he moved to Boston in 2009 where he started working as a Medical Case Manager at Boston Medical Center. His duties include home visits, medication support, HIV testing services ID Clinic, STD Clinic, and inpatient HIV testers doing HIV/STD counseling for newly diagnosed positive patients. He then transitioned to Codman Square Health Center and from there Fenway Health. Lawrence specialized in Gay/Bi/Tran HIV (+) patients of color. Lawrence provided medical case management services to clients who were engaged/retained in-care and

those who have falling out-of-care. At Fenway SMILE Linkage to Care Program, a youth program that Link, engage, and retain HIV+ youth. Lawrence, through a racial justice lens, assisted the creation and proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment and outcomes for all. Now Lawrence now work for the Massachusetts's Department of Public Health as an Epidemiologist providing with preventive treatment and linkable services to people infected with STID's and HIV/AIDS. Lawrence services as chair of the Ryan White Part A HIV funding in the Boston Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) for people living with HIV/AIDS. He also is the vice-chair of the Harvard University Center for AIDS Research CAB. Lawrence aspires to assist with foster constructive dialogues and actionable items to one day dismantle racism, discrimination, and racial justice that plaque LGBTQ people of color in hopes to achieve equitable systemic change on a state, and one day, a national level.



Alexander Walker
Safe Schools Committee

Alex is an elementary special education teacher. Originally from the midwest Alex began teaching in Chicago and moved to Massachusetts to pursue a degree in special education. After beginning his career as a public school teacher in Chicago, he sought out ways to create more inclusive classrooms and resources for students who were LGBTQ. He began volunteering with the Illinois Safe School Alliance on their Youth Committee. While volunteering, he helped organize and empower youth to run youth summits on topics such as how to start a GSA, Trans 101, and creating inclusive pride alliances for gender variant youth. In his free time Alex enjoys spending time with his dogs and partner.

Rachel Wallack
Government Relations

Rachel is an attorney employed by the Juvenile Court. In addition to expertise in the areas of juvenile delinquency and child welfare, Rachel has significant experience working with youth in

both secure detention and residential placement programs. Rachel volunteers as a big sister through Big Sister Association of Greater Boston and resides on the North Shore.



Ashley Waterberg
Safe Schools Committee

Ashley works as a middle school social worker in the Revere Public School system. She serves as one of three representatives of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) on the Commission, and she also serves as a co-chair of the LGBTQA Special Interest Group through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Massachusetts Chapter. During her spare time, she enjoys

hiking, biking, dancing, snowshoeing, road trips and exploring new places. Ashley received her Master's degree in Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis and her undergraduate degree in Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Vermont.

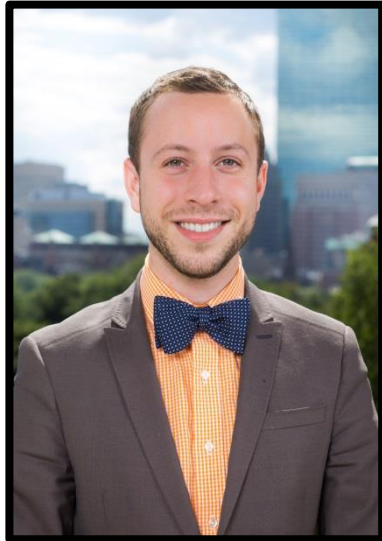
Jess Weaver
Government Relations Committee

Jess originally moved to Massachusetts to serve as Community Organizing & Outreach Manager of the SouthCoast Energy Challenge, a nonprofit dedicated to improving energy efficiency through community outreach. The project served 27 cities and towns in the region and helped reduce its carbon footprint. This opportunity followed work in both political and advocacy organizing, as well as an educational background in political science and psychology. In 2016, Jess is working in state electoral politics and continuing to explore New England as often as possible.

Dominique Wilkins
Community Relations Committee

A baaaad mama-jama. Dominique completed their undergraduate and graduate work at Clark University in Worcester, focusing on City Planning and Youth and Community Development. Upon finishing, Dominique served for 2 years as an Americorps member for a play-based youth

development non-profit, and stayed for another 2 years after her service ended. They are currently a Boston public school teacher at an elementary school in Dorchester. Dominique also volunteers with the Hispanic Black Gay Coalition (HBGC) and is a passionate about vocalizing the presence and concerns of people of color in queer communities. Originally from suburbs of Washington DC, Dominique now resides in Roslindale.



Alex Zafris

Alexander Zafris joined the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center in January 2015 to work on the organization's Academic and Workforce Programs. He previously served in the Office of Governor Deval L. Patrick as the Governor's Scheduler and Briefing Coordinator. He is a member of the Board of Directors on the Alumni Association of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts, Summa Cum Laude, in 2012.

Commission Staff



Kevin Lam

Commission Coordinator

Kevin Lam has been with the Commission since September 2015. He is a queer, Southeast Asian (Lao and Vietnamese) male, second-generation, and from a working-class family. He graduated from the State University of New York at New Paltz with an MPS in Humanistic & Multicultural Education and a BA in Asian Studies and Theatre Arts. He is currently serving on the board of the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA).

He was born and raised in Poughkeepsie, NY due to his family's displacement by the war in Southeast Asia, the "American War". His family fled to the United States as refugees, leaving everything they knew and their established lives back in their homeland. His passion for social justice and organizing is grounded in his family's and community's histories and narratives. He believes that issues need to be addressed from an intersectional framework, and that the communities most impacted by issues must have their voices and experiences centered.

With the Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM), Kevin worked with Southeast Asian and queer young people to address issues of racial profiling and police brutality, and visibility of a queer Southeast Asian community. Drawing from his community's and family's experiences, as well as his own personal experiences, he is looking forward to working with the LGBTQ community in Massachusetts, sharing narratives, and building relationships, power and community with each other. In his spare time, Kevin performs as a drag queen.



Hannah Hussey

Director of Policy and Research

Hannah started as the Commission's Director of Policy and Research in 2015, after having earlier served for two years as the Commission's Coordinator. She has also worked as a Research Associate at the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C., where she produced policy documents focusing on the needs of LGBTQ youth in relation to homelessness, juvenile justice, education, immigration, and economic security. Previously,

Hannah held internships with MassEquality and the Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights and spent several years as a freelance reporter. Originally from Maine, Hannah received her B.A. in sociology and women's, gender, and sexuality studies from Tufts University, where her capstone project examined the contributions of feminist and queer theory to asexuality studies.

Alexandria Chiu

Safe Schools Program Coordinator

Bio Coming Soon!

**Jeff Perrotti**

Safe Schools Program Director

Jeff Perrotti is the founding director of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Safe Schools Program for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students. He is the co-author of *When the Drama Club is not Enough* (Beacon Press, 2002). Jeff is a graduate of Northwestern University, University of California at Santa Barbara, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He has conducted numerous workshops on sexual orientation, gender, anti-bullying, resilience, and suicide and violence prevention for school administrators, counselors, nurses, coaches, teachers, parents, and students. For the past six years, Jeff has worked closely with vocational technical schools to support students who are interested in careers that are nontraditional for their gender. Jeff teaches and advises students at Harvard University, where he has received several awards for excellence in teaching. Jeff is a consultant for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Commission.

**Jason Wheeler**

Safe Schools Program Manager

Jason Wheeler has been professionally committed to youth development and leadership for the past 17 years, beginning with his extensive involvement in National Service programs that focused on issues related to education, disability inclusion, and social justice. Jason now provides national training and technical assistance on a variety of topics ranging from youth engagement to strategic planning and organizational

development. He has worked extensively with LGBTQ youth, veterans, and disabled people. He is a graduate trainee of the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Program at Children's Hospital Boston, a graduate-level interdisciplinary training for health professionals. Jason serves as a Board Member and the Conference Chair for the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) of Massachusetts.